

DNA Evidence Management Procedures

1 Purpose

This document describes the operational guidance and procedures for evidence management in the DNA Casework Unit (DCU) and the Scientific and Biometrics Analysis Unit DNA Group (SBAU). The Case Administration Group (CAG) functions as the evidence hub within DCU.

2 Scope

This document applies to DNA personnel performing evidence management tasks, including receiving, transferring, and returning evidence, for DCU and SBAU.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Unit personnel with responsibilities related to the assignment of DCU and SBAU cases and evidence transfer will follow the requirements in the FBI *Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual* (QAM) and the relevant practices of the FBI *Laboratory Operations Manual* (LOM) as it pertains to receipt, check-in, inventory, transfer, return, and storage of physical evidence.

3.2 Unit personnel will record all evidence transfers in the FBI Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) Forensic Advantage (FA) and/or in the unit's Sample Tracking and Control System (STACS) software, on a paper *Chain-of-Custody Log* (7-243/7243a), or in the Chain-of-Custody Log in the Explosives Reference Tool (EXPeRT), as appropriate.

4 Procedures

It is noted that the procedures listed below will typically occur in the order described; however, to maximize the workflow, they can occur in a different order, as necessary.

4.1 General Operations

4.1.1 Evidence transfers to/from entities outside of DCU are generally performed by CAG personnel, with the exception of transfers that occur outside of normal Laboratory Division (LD) business hours. In these situations, other appropriately trained personnel may temporarily support CAG functions. DNA discipline evidence transfers in SBAU are generally performed by SBAU DNA personnel.

4.1.2 All evidence transfers, including secondary evidence transfers, will be recorded in FA, in STACS, on a paper *Chain-of-Custody Log* generally, or in the Chain-of-Custody Log in EXPeRT, as appropriate, prior to performing any work on the evidence.

4.1.2.1 A virtual transfer is a recording of a transfer within FA, STACS, or EXPeRT where the physical custody of the item does not change. Virtual transfers are typically used when switching between the LIMS systems, for administrative reasons (e.g., Chain-of-Custody [COC] corrections in STACS), or due to limitations of the software.

4.1.3 Transfers of drug and valuable evidence will be performed according to the appropriate LOM practice. Appropriate locations for the storage of drug and valuable evidence may be physically located outside of DCU or SBAU controlled space; however, virtual storage locations for these areas will be available within STACS.

4.1.4 Evidence will be stored under appropriate conditions. In general, liquid blood, tissue, vaginal aspirates, and DNA extracts will be refrigerated. Potential latent items should be stored at room temperature. All other evidence may be stored refrigerated, frozen, or at room temperature as determined by DNA personnel.

4.1.5 FA, STACS, and/or EXPeRT barcodes/labels may be used, as appropriate, for identifying evidence.

4.1.6 For Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) investigations or prohibited cases that are conducted outside of FA, the case and sample information entered into STACS will be limited to generic descriptions.

4.2 Evidence Receipt

4.2.1 The listing of incoming evidence placed in the Evidence Storage Room (ESR) can be viewed in the DNA (Primary) Evidence module (or equivalent) of FA. For evidence submitted in Legacy cases, CAG and SBAU personnel will be notified, typically by email, by the Evidence Management Unit (EMU) or the delivering LD unit.

4.2.2 Evidence may be physically transferred in bulk from the DCU ESR or by a hand to hand transfer(s) from EMU or other LD unit personnel to a laboratory space for receiving into DCU by any CAG member, as long as the evidence transfers are appropriately recorded. The CAG laboratory space (e.g., Rm 3390) may be used as a temporary storage location for all non-drug and valuable related evidence during evidence receipt into DCU. Evidence may be physically transferred in bulk from the SBAU ESR to a laboratory space for receiving into SBAU by any SBAU DNA personnel. Note: All drug and valuable evidence will be transferred hand to hand, as per LOM requirements.

4.2.3 Evidence Receipt in a Multiple Unit Submission (MUS)

For legacy cases not in FA use the appropriate Chain-of Custody Log in lieu of FA.

4.2.3.1 Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in FA.

4.2.3.2 Record a virtual evidence transfer in FA by selecting the “Placed in Storage” (or equivalent) transfer type and the “DCU (see DCU STACS COC)” or “SBAU DNA (see SBAU DNA STACS COC)” (or equivalent) storage location.

4.2.3.3 The information pertaining to the evidence received and packaging expectations in the FA batch details is captured in a record referred to as the FA list. This record is typically uploaded to the Case Record Object Repository and/or the paperwork tab in STACS.

4.2.3.4 Proceed to Receipt and Inventory in STACS.

4.2.4 Evidence Receipt in a Single Unit Submission (SUS)

4.2.4.1 Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in FA.

4.2.4.2 Review the request for examinations (e.g., Electronic Communication [EC], Laboratory Examination Request [LER], incoming communication) and any additional records to determine relevant information regarding the submitted evidence.

4.2.4.3 Perform evidence breakdown according to the appropriate LOM practice (i.e., Practices for Processing a Submission and Evidence Breakdown). This includes generating check-in notes, capturing the batch details (i.e., generating the FA list), and assigning newly inventoried items to the DNA Case Record in FA.

4.2.4.4 Scan and/or upload applicable records (e.g., Check-in notes, missing person consent forms, FA list) to the Case Record Object Repository, Case Object Repository and/or to STACS, as appropriate.

4.2.4.5 Record a virtual evidence transfer in FA by selecting the “Placed in Storage” transfer type and the “DCU (see DCU STACS COC)” or “SBAU DNA (see SBAU DNA STACS COC)” (or equivalent) storage location.

4.2.5 Receipt and Inventory in STACS

4.2.5.1 Use the Receipt and Inventory module to add an evidence container. Scan a STACS container barcode (e.g., AXXXXXE) and apply to the evidence container.

4.2.5.2 Fill out the appropriate information fields pertaining to the evidence container (i.e., Container Description, Seal State Description, and External Unit of origin).

4.2.5.3 Based on the information from the batch details in FA (i.e., the FA list) and/or the container markings, select the appropriate items of evidence in STACS and add to the newly created STACS container (i.e., by scanning or drag and drop). Highlight the container, then

complete the container inventory to confirm. Repeat, as needed, for additional evidence containers.

4.2.6 Completion of Evidence Receipt

4.2.6.1 As necessary (i.e., receipt of SUS evidence), notify the contributor that the evidence was received within DCU or SBAU and record the contact in the Case Communication Log within FA or STACS. [Refer to the Practices for Assigning Cases and Conducting Examinations.] Ensure emails are retained (i.e., attached to the Case Communication Log, retained in a physical 1A, or uploaded to Sentinel).

4.2.6.2 Compile appropriate case records. Records are generally maintained digitally. FA records (e.g., Case Record Report, Exam Plan) as well as records from the Object Repository (e.g., EC/LER/incoming communication, Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) paperwork, missing persons consent forms, TEDAC submission forms) may be printed for temporary reference or if a paper case file will be generated. For a legacy case, the equivalent paperwork may be received or compiled.

4.2.6.3 Use the appropriate transfer module in STACS and transfer the evidence to a person or a storage location.

4.3 Evidence Return

4.3.1 When ensuring all items are accounted for, FA must be referenced for packaging information when the contents are paper based evidence items (e.g., envelopes, letters), with the exception of legacy cases. Packaging expectations for other types of evidence may be obtained from either FA or STACS.

4.3.2 When returning secondary evidence, create a new FA item as needed, and generate a secondary evidence list report in STACS. This secondary evidence log will be uploaded to the Case Object Repository and/or the Case Record Object Repository in FA. For legacy cases, the secondary evidence log will be retained with the case records.

4.3.2.1 If secondary evidence from both a MUS and a SUS for a case will be returned at the same time and to the same location, all secondary evidence may be returned with the MUS.

4.3.3 Evidence Return in a Multiple Unit Submission (MUS) and TEDAC cases

For legacy cases use the appropriate Chain-of Custody Log in lieu of FA.

4.3.3.1 Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in STACS.

4.3.3.2 For evidence containers opened in DCU or SBAU, ensure all items are accounted for and sealed appropriately.

4.3.3.3 In the “Transfer to/from External Unit” module in STACS, record a virtual transfer of the evidence, including any necessary comments (e.g., FA item number for secondary), by selecting “Transfer to/from FA” (or equivalent) as the external unit or another location, as appropriate.

4.3.3.4 In FA, record and physically transfer the evidence to the appropriate storage location or person.

4.3.4 Evidence Return and Shipping of a Single Unit Submission (SUS)

For a TEDAC SUS refer to the above sections of 4.3, as needed.

4.3.4.1 Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in STACS.

4.3.4.2 Ensure all items are accounted for and sealed appropriately.

4.3.4.3 In the “Transfer to/from External Unit” module in STACS, record a virtual transfer of the evidence, including any necessary comments (e.g. FA item number for secondary), by selecting “Transfer to/from FA” (or equivalent) as the external unit or another location, as appropriate.

4.3.4.4 Record a virtual evidence transfer in FA from the “DCU (see DCU STACS COC)” or “SBAU DNA (see SBAU DNA STACS COC)” (or equivalent) storage location to the appropriate person. Package the evidence for return according to the appropriate LOM practice. Ensure the FA label is affixed to the shipping container and the appropriate items within the shipping container are reflected in FA.

4.3.4.5 Ensure the shipping address is correct and generate a *Shipping Invoice* (7-264/7-264 LIMS) in accordance with the appropriate LOM practice.

4.3.4.6 Ensure the *Shipping Invoice* and secondary evidence log (if applicable) are in the shipping container and a copy of the first page of the *Shipping Invoice* is attached to the outside of the container.

4.3.4.7 Ensure the shipping container is labeled with the appropriate evidence type descriptor (e.g., general [G], drug [D], valuable [V], firearm [F]). As appropriate, ensure the refrigeration label is affixed to shipping container.

4.3.4.8 Physically transfer the sealed shipping container to the mail room and record a hand-to-hand transfer in FA. Sealed shipping containers may be appropriately stored prior to transfer to the mail room.

4.3.5 Evidence Return Records

The following records are typically generated and/or retained during evidence return:

- Secondary Evidence List Report is uploaded to the Case Object Repository in

FA or may be uploaded to the Case Record Object Repository for TEDAC cases.

- *Shipping Invoice* (for non-TEDAC SUS cases) is uploaded to Case Object Repository and may be uploaded to the Case Record Object Repository.
- STACS Chain-of-Custody may be generated during evidence return and uploaded to the Case Record Object Repository and/or will be uploaded to Case Object Repository when the case is closed in STACS

5 Safety

All laboratory operations will be performed in a safe manner and in accordance with the standards established by applicable regulatory agencies. Personnel in CAG and SBAU will follow the health and safety measures outlined in the QAM, *FBI Laboratory Safety Manual*, and the applicable section(s) of relevant DNA procedures.

6 References

FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual

FBI Laboratory Operations Manual

FBI Laboratory Safety Manual

DNA Procedures Manual

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
7	10/02/17	Added BAU and legacy throughout. 4.1.7 To addressed OPR cases within STACS
8	04/01/21	Added Scientific and corrected to SBAU throughout 3.1: Simplified section 4.1.1: Specified DNA discipline evidence for SBAU 4.1.2.1: Edited physical location to physical custody 4.1.4: DNA personnel determine appropriate storage 4.2.1: Added FA module, updated EMG to EMU and consolidated guidance for DCU and SBAU 4.2.2: Added hand to hand transfers and not for D&V evidence 4.2.3: Clarified for legacy cases not in FA 4.2.3.1, 4.2.4.1, 4.3.3.1, 4.3.4.1: Added to personal custody 4.2.3.2: Added or equivalent 4.2.3.3: Added generating the FA list 4.2.4.2: Added LER 4.2.4.3: Added steps included in evidence breakdown 4.2.4.4: Added upload locations, as appropriate 4.2.5.3: Revised wording, added reference to FA list 4.2.6.1: Added examples and reference to LOM 4.2.6.2: Generalized records compiled at this step. Made printing optional 4.3.2: Corrected uploads to different repositories for DCU vs SBAU 4.3.3.3, 4.3.4.3: Added guidance to include FA item in comments 4.3.4: Reworded TEDAC reference 4.3.4.7: Added guidance for evidence type descriptor and refrigeration label 4.3.5: Added section for evidence return records

Approval

Redacted - Signatures on File

DNA Technical Leader Date: 03/31/2021

SBAU Chief Date: 03/31/2021

DCU Chief Date: 03/31/2021

QA Approval

Quality Manager Date: 03/31/2021